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**16.0 OBJECTIVE**

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In this Unit, You will learn about

- New criticism movement
- Concepts of new criticism
- Originates of new criticism

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**16.1 INTRODUCTION**

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New criticism movement emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century literary criticism in reaction to the traditional approaches. Traditional approaches are extrinsic and it includes moral or philosophical statements and effect of biographical, political, historical or social happenings or circumstances. The new criticism was a formalist movement in literary theory that influenced American literary criticism in the middle decades of the twentieth century. It emphasized close reading to explore how literature

worked as an independent and self-referential object. The name of this movement is derived from John Crowe Ransom's book *New Criticism*. I. A. Richards' work named *Practical Criticism and The Meaning of meaning* were foundational to the growth of New Critical Movement. Eliot developed his idea of "Objective Correlative" in his critical essays such as *Tradition and Individual Talent* and *Hamlet and his Problems*. Eliot's criticism of Milton and Shelley, his love for metaphysical poets and his insistence that poetry must be impersonal affected the origination of the New Criticism movement.

New Criticism is one of the most important movements in modern critical scholarship. New critics were responding against accepted style in American criticism and fighting for the priority of the literary text rather concentrated on comprehension based on context. Wellek says that there are many new critics in the 1930s and few of them could be grouped together. He calls Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren as the leaders of "Southern Critics". They are grouped together because they taught at southern universities when the theory of New Criticism constructed and also because their reply to the impressionist criticism, the humourist movement, the naturalist movement and the Marxists.

New criticism is defined as a critical movement that propagates the idea of "art for art's sake". New critics believe that criticism is an integral part of social development. New criticism focuses on close reading of technicalities, structure, themes and message of literary texts. The well-wrought Urn was published by Cleanth Brooks in 1947 describes New Criticism theory. The text explains many seminal poetic texts using the principles of the New Critics.

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## **16.2 HISTORY**

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The established philological and literary history schools of the US North affected by nineteenth century German Scholarship which concentrated on the history and meaning of words and their connection to foreign and ancient languages, comparative sources and the biographical conditions of the authors. New criticism created as a response to this established philosophical and literary history.

New critics depreciate literary appreciation school which focuses on the "beauties" and qualities of the text. New critics directed for newer, systematic and objective method. New critics thought that the formation and the importance of the text were closely associated and should not be examined independently. Ransom's "Criticism Inc." and Allen Tate's "Miss Emily and the Biographers" expressed that New critics eliminated the reader's response, the author's intention, historical and cultural contexts and moralistic bias from the analysis to concentrate on the literary studies.

William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley published a New critical essay titled “The Intentional Fallacy”. They wrote against the relevance of an author’s intention or “intended meaning” in the analysis of a literary text in the Intentional Fallacy. Wimsatt and Beardsley give importance to the words in the text. Meaning outside of the text was considered extraneous and disturbing. Wimsatt and Beardsley published another essay named “The Affective Fallacy” which is closely related to Intentional Fallacy. They decried the reader’s personal or emotional response to a literary text as a valid way of analysing a text. Theorist of reader-response school of literary theory rejected this fallacy.

Stanley Fish was one of the leading theorists of this school was trained by New Critics. Wimsatt and Beardsley were criticised by Fish in his essay “Literature in the Reader” published in 1970. The prime of the New Criticism in American High schools and colleges was the Cold war decades between 1950 to the mid-seventies, because it offers a relatively uncomplicated and politically uncontroversial approach of the teaching literature. Brooks and Warren’s *Understanding poetry and Understanding fiction* both became essential during this age.

Accurate and precise analysis of the passage is required in New critical style. Rhyme, meter, characterisation, setting and plot were utilised to recognise the theme of the text. New critics integrated the themes such as paradox, ambiguity, irony and tension for the best understanding of the text. New criticism is no longer a supreme theoretical model in American universities. Some methods of New Criticism are fundamental tools of literary criticism.

Allen Tate says about ‘poetry’ is that it is not the tool to convey indescribable emotions, but it is an independent form of writing. Parts of the Poem adapt and cooperate each other. Allan Tate believes that there should be social relevance with the poetry. According to Tate, a poem provides “special, unique and complete knowledge” of the world. He says that poetry is expressed through “tension”, a term he formulated by “lopping the prefixes off the logical terms extension and intension.”

Allen Tate was born in Winchester, Kentucky in 1879. He was educated at Vanderbilt University. He accompanied John Crowe Ransom’s literary discussion group. He was the co-founder and editor of the journal ‘The Fugitive’, it is a poetry magazine, published nineteen issues between 1922-1925. He published volumes of poetry named as ‘Poems’ in 1960 and ‘The Swimmers’ in 1970. He published his first book of criticism named as ‘Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas’ in 1936 and joined Tennessee University in 1934. He joined University of Minnesota as an English professor in 1951. ‘Reason in Madness’ and ‘On the Limits of Poetry’ entrenched him as a critic. He worked as the editor of ‘Sewanee Review’ from 1944 to 1946. He wrote ‘Mr Pope and Other Poems’ in 1928 and ‘Three Poems’ in 1930.

J. C. Ransom was born in Pulaski in 1888. He graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1909. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Christ Church College,

oxford and earned degree in 1913. He worked at Vanderbilt University till 1937. He was the leader of Southern Agrarians or Fugitives group of the writers. Cleanth Brooks, Allen Tate and Robert Penn Warren are the members of the group called Southern Agrarians or Fugitives. Allen Tate, Donald Davidson, Robert Penn Warren and Randall Jarrell consider him their mentor. Ransom was the influencer as critic, poet, teacher and editor. He moved to Kenyon college, Ohio in 1937.

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## 16.3 CONCEPTS IN NEW CRITICISM

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### 16.3.1 Objective Correlative

T. S. Eliot wrote an essay “Hamlet and his problems” , published in *The Sacred Wood* in 1920 in which he explained the literary term “Objective Correlative”. The painter, Washington Allston talked about this term in his lecture on art to explain the relation between mind and the external world in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Eliot writes: The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (qtd. in J. A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, page 647)

Objective correlative refers to the idea that emotions can be objectively represented in art through symbols or events that are correlated with specific emotions. It serves as a means of expressing emotions indirectly, rather than directly stating the emotion in words. In other words, an objective correlative is a literary device that connects specific emotions with objects, images or actions, so that the audience can experience those emotions by association. It refers to a group of objects, events or sensations that serve as symbols or representations of emotions or ideas.

George Santayana expanded this approach in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* in 1900. Santayana told that Correlative objects provoke a poet’s feelings and could not only convey it. Eliot believes that if authors can’t find Objective Correlatives for the feelings they want to express, readers will be distrustful, un affected and bewildered. Eliot tried his approach of “Objective Correlative” to the play *Hamlet* written by Shakespeare in 1602 and he contended that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure because incidents in the play do not justify emotions of Hamlet and lead to discouragement.

Eliot explicitly defined the term as “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular, emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, we given, the emotion is immediately evoked”.

Eliot used the term “Objective Correlative” to manifest how feelings can be conveyed in poetry and it is a part of his impersonal theory of poetry focusing on poetry and not on the poet. Eliot has studied from the French symbolists that feelings can be awaken and cannot be expressed

straightforwardly. Ezra Pound assumed Eliot's theory in "The Spirit of Romance".

### 16.3.2 The Intentional Fallacy

The term, The Intentional Fallacy used in 20<sup>th</sup> Century literary criticism describes the problem inherent in trying to judge intent or purpose of the author. The Intentional Fallacy was introduced by W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley in *The Verbal Icon* in 1954. This approach was a response to the popular thought to understand the intention of author, what he was thinking at the time of writing to know actual explanation of the work. It refers to the mistake of assuming that the author's intention or purpose is the most important factor in determining the meaning or value of a literary work.

The significance of the work does not belong to the author's intention. Authors are not reliable beings. Sometimes there can be vast difference between intention and outcome. Elizabeth Jolley said "I have written what I have written. It's up to you to work it out." For the meaning of her novel *The Wall* published in 1986 at the Brisbane Writers Festival. Literary criticism was dependent on author-biography approaches. Wimsatt and Beardsley introduced the new idea for literary works arguments about comprehension of work is not settled by taking advice from the author. What the author is able to encapsulate in the work is more important than what the author thinks or intends at the time of composition of the work.

"The Affective Fallacy" means a work evokes subjective effects of expressions of feelings in the reader's mind are not relevant to the verbal object study since objective structure comprises the meaning of the work. The Intentional Fallacy is part of the American New Criticism arguments which focuses on literary texts and not on the author's life, social or historical factors of literature. The Intentional Fallacy means the act of delimiting literary study and segregate it from biography or sociology. The meaning lies in the literary work and not in intentions of the author.

The New Critics used "Close Reading" method for actual interpretation of a work. Close reading means the explanation of the way literature encapsulate universal truth. These truths were identified as "Concrete Universals". This approach has been challenged and questioned for many reasons, specifically the disregard of context and faith in universal truth.

E. D. Hirsch opposed the New critics, Wimsatt and Beardsley in *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) by using harsh words and said that "false and facile dogma that what an author intended is irrelevant to the meaning of the text." This was a time instantly after Freud when these was a trend to look at the literature as the reflection of the author's mind.

Hirsch said that author is the only possible source to comprehend the meaning of the work. As per his intentionalist view, meaning must be decided by the author's or critic's mind and words cannot mean anything.

Beardsley gave response to Hirsch and said that some works have no authors but still they are meaningful, authors die without giving views on their works and words can change their meaning over the years. There is no opportunity for communication between author and reader apart from writer's festival or literary lunch.

Roland Bathes carried on the argument about author and intention in his essay "The Death of the Author" published in 1968. The last line of the essay is: "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author." He criticized the conventional view of the author as the ultimate "explanation" of a work. Meaning generated by the readers are also the main source of power in the text.

### **16.3.3 Affective Fallacy**

The term "Affective Fallacy" was invented by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley as a principle of New Criticism. The term was used to refer to the intended wrong judgement and perception of text based on its emotional effects on a reader. The new criticism addressed a new, scholarly way to deal with literary studies that focused on the literary text as a social artifact that communicate the internal life of author or the society in which it was composed.

The new critics tried to change literary criticism into a stern area, developed on the predominant concept of knowledge in modern society-science. They forced critics to talk on the work of art and analyse human creativity and artistic creation.

A literary critic, Wimsatt was working as a professor at the English Department of Yale University. He taught until he died in 1975. Beardsley was a philosopher of art and aesthetics. Wimsatt as a staunch formalist critic thought in the ownership of the poem and any study of as a poem must center on the text. Formalism is a school of literary criticism and literary theory which focuses on the structural purposes of a particular text. It is the study of the text without taking into account biographical, historical or intellectual context. The name "Formalism" derives from one of the central tenets of Formalist thought: That the form of a work of literature is inherently a part of its content, and that the attempt to separate the two is a fallacious undertaking. Formalists believed that we can trace the evolution and progress of literary form by concentrating on literary form and neglecting superfluous contexts.

Before twentieth century criticism had focused broadly on the life or social class of the author. Formalism emerged as a response to this form of criticism. This approach neglected to consider the standards and design that administers the creation of art. A lot of Wimsatt's theory originates from uncertainty towards "impressionism, subjectivism and relativism" in criticism. The only reservation the theorist need have about such critical impressionism or expressionism, says Wimsatt, is that, after all, it does not carry on very far in our cogitation about the nature and value of literature...it is not a very mature form of cognitive discoursell.

Wimsatt and his fellow formalists were worried about ensuring a level of authenticity in English literature by making a more logical way to deal with analysis which would obtain for literary criticism a prominent position and reliability. They criticized “Affective approach” as —less a scientific view of literature than a prerogative  $\neg$ —that of a soul adventuring among masterpieces.

As believed by Formalis, the aim of the critic should be to analyse the characteristics of art. Text’s “literariness”, the object of reflection makes a work of art and not a discourse of Journalism in the case of literature. Wimsatt used the term “An Affective Fallacy” to refer to all types of criticism that interpret effect of text on the reader to be the main way to criticize the significance and success of the work. This definition consists all most all the main modes of literary criticism from Aristotle’s Catharsis and Longinus’s concept of the sublime to belles-letters and the Chicago critics. All these methods emphasized the effect of literature on the audience. Impressionistic approaches raise both practical and theoretical issues. In practical issue, it makes differences of various critics tough and broadly not relevant. Taking into consideration, the affective fallacy filled with the new critics’ wish to put literary criticism on a more objective and principles method.

In the theoretical problem, affective fallacy was generally unstable because it rejected the nature of the literary text. New critics emphasized exclusive form of poetic language and they argued that critic’s role is to learn and decode the theme and style of text without interference of an outside context such as history, biography or reader-response. The concept of the affective fallacy was controversial as well as influential. It was never accepted by a great number of critics. Affective Fallacy is the idea that a work of art’s emotional impact should be the sole criterion for evaluating its value, rather than considering its formal qualities or technical skill.

#### **16.3.4 Close Reading**

Close meaning means attentive and sustained explanation of a brief passage of a text. Close reading stresses on the specific over the universal, observe closely to individual words, syntax and sequence of the sentences and ideas developed as they read. The technique, close reading was introduced by I. A. Richards and his student William Empson later developed by the New Critics of the Mid-twentieth century. It is a primary method of modern criticism. Close reading is also called *explication de texte*. It is the name of a similar tradition of text comprehension in French literary study. Gustave Lanson was the chief advocate of this technique.

Close reading often involves reading a text several times, paying attention to details such as the author’s word choices, the structure of sentences and paragraphs, and the use of imagery and symbols. It also often involves considering the historical, cultural, and social context in which the text was produced, as well as literary traditions and conventions it

draws upon. Close reading is an important method of literary analysis because it allows the reader to gain a deep and nuanced understanding of a text, beyond just its surface level meaning. It has been a central practice in the New criticism movement.

Close reading is a method of literary analysis that involves a detailed and careful examination of a text. It involves breaking down a text into its constituent parts and examining each part in order to understand the whole. The goal of close reading is to uncover the meaning and structure of a text, as well as to understand the relationships between its various elements, such as imagery, language and form. The goal of close reading is to understand the text as a whole, including its meaning, themes, and messages, rather than focusing on its individual elements in isolation.

Close reading of *Quran* has bloomed and developed vast corpus in Islamic studies. J. Hillis Miller describes Jacques Derrida's essay *Ulysses Gramophone* as a "hyperbolic, extravagant ..... explosion" of close reading technique. James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* consists more than eight pages to an explanation of the word "yes".

### **16.3.5 Organic Unity**

Organic Unity is the idea that a thing is made up of independent parts. Plato, a philosopher founded the concept of Organic Unity. Plato used this form in *The Republic Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*. Organic Unity was not recognized until the principle was adopted by Aristotle. Organic Unity's respective and metaphoric reflections are maintained in all the works of Aristotle. Organic Unity is explained in Aristotle's Poetics that how works depend on description and drama to maintain cohesive to each other and not as independent things. If balance is not maintained on both the sides, the whole concept gets failed.

Organic Unity refers to the idea in philosophy and aesthetics that a whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and that parts are interdependent and work together to create a harmonious and unified whole. It's a concept that is often applied to various works of art and literature, where the elements of the work are seen as interconnected and serving a common purpose.

The main goal of Organic Unity depends on a free-spirited style of writing and by sticking to rules or genre-based habits, the actual form of a work becomes stifled and not reliable on an artistic plane. Through the New Critics movement, the concept of Organic Unity gained fame. Cleanth Brooks played significant role in updating the principle of Organic Unity.

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## **16.4 LET US SUM UP**

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New criticism is a formalist theory in literary criticism. New criticism introduced new concept in literary criticism i.e. Objective Correlative, Intentional Fallacy, Objective Fallacy, Close Reading and Organic Unity. New Criticism focuses on the work rather the intention and feelings of



the author and society. W. K. Wimsatt, Monroe Beardsley, Cleanth Brooks, I.A.Richards and Robert Penn Warren are the chief exponents of New Criticism.

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## 16.5 KEYWORDS

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<b>Formalist</b>	relating to or supporting principles of formalism
<b>Insistence</b>	the fact or quality of insisting that something is the case or should be done.
<b>Inherent</b>	existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute.
<b>Encapsulate</b>	express the essential features of (something) succinctly
<b>Artifact</b>	an object that is made by a person
<b>Predominant</b>	most noticeable, powerful or important
<b>Staunch</b>	believing in somebody/something or supporting somebody/something very strongly; loyal
<b>Advocate</b>	to recommend or say that you support a particular plan or action
<b>Stifle</b>	to stop something happening, developing or continuing
<b>Reliable</b>	that you can trust

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## 16.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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- **Long Question**

1. Discuss the originates of New Criticism.
2. Explain any three concepts of New Criticism.
3. Write about any two American New Critics, and their contribution to literary theory and practice.

- **Short Question**

1. What is Organic Unity?

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2. What is Close Reading?

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3. What is Intentional Fallacy?

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4. What is Affectual Fallacy?

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5. What is Objective Correlative?

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• **MCQ**

1. T. S. Eliot wrote an essay “Hamlet and his problems” Which was published in The Sacred Wood in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. 1927
  - b. **1920**
  - c. 1930
  - d. 1937
  
2. The term, The Intentional Fallacy used in \_\_\_\_\_ Century literary criticism describes the problem inherent in trying to judge intent or purpose of the author.
  - a. 18<sup>th</sup>
  - b. 19<sup>th</sup>
  - c. 21<sup>st</sup>
  - d. **20<sup>th</sup>**
  
3. The term “Affective Fallacy” was invented by W. K. Wimsatt and \_\_\_\_\_ as a principle of New Criticism.
  - a. Plato
  - b. Aristotle
  - c. **Monroe Beardsley**
  - d. I.A. Richards
  
4. The technique, close reading was introduced by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Plato
  - b. Aristotle
  - c. Monroe Beardsley
  - d. **I.A. Richards**
  
5. Organic Unity was not recognized until the principle was adopted by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Plato
  - b. **Aristotle**
  - c. Cleanth
  - d. Wimsatt
  
6. \_\_\_\_\_ calls Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren as the leaders of “Southern Critics”.
  - a. **Wellek**
  - b. Aristotle

- c. Wimsatt  
d. I.A.Richards
7. \_\_\_\_\_ describes Jacques Derrida's essay *Ulysses Gramophone* as a "hyperbolic, extravagant ..... explosion" of close reading technique.  
a. **J. Hillis Miller**  
b. Allen Tate  
c. Wimsatt  
d. Plato
8. J. C. Ransom was born in Pulaski in \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. **1888**  
b. 1989  
c. 1876  
d. 1834
9. \_\_\_\_\_ is a philosopher founded the concept of Organic Unity.  
a. **Plato**  
b. Aristotle  
c. Cleanth  
d. Wimsatt
10. The painter, \_\_\_\_\_ talked about this term in his lecture on art to explain the relation between mind and the external world in 19<sup>th</sup> century.  
a. **Washington Allston**  
b. Monroe Beardsley  
c. Allen Tate  
d. J. C. Ransom

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## 16.7 FURTHER READING

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- <https://asiancha.com/NewCriticism.pdf>
- [https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA\\_English/Paper\\_16.pdf](https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA_English/Paper_16.pdf)
- <https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/22641/1/Unit-4.pdf>
- <https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/22645/1/Unit-6.pdf>
- <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-4438-2330-2-sample.pdf>
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/363503>
- From the New Criticism to Deconstruction: The Reception of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism by Art Berman, University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Praising It New: The Best of the New Criticism by Garrick Davis, Ohio University Press, 2008
- Rereading the New Criticism by Miranda B. Hickman and John D. McIntyre, The Ohio State University Press, 2012.